

Patricia M. Muhammad
presents

MURDER BY DISSENT

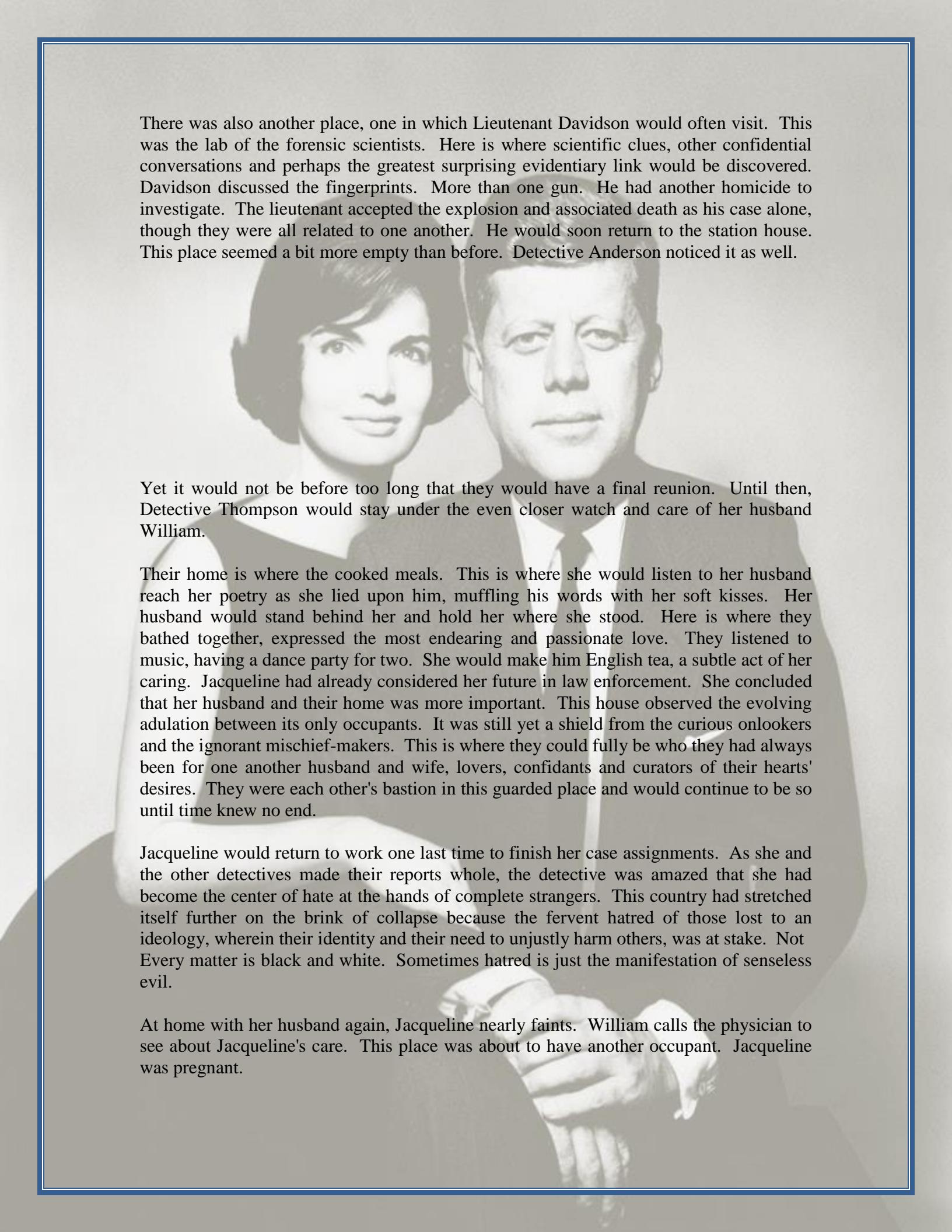
Places:

Murder By Dissent is a mystery/detective-historical romance novel set in 1960s New York. A "coloured" station house in a small town begins as the center of Detective Jacqueline Sadie Thompson's day. She is married to William Singleton, an Anglo Englishman. It is here where she receives her new assignment. This is where some gain a nuanced understanding of the racial divide in the United States. Civil unrest. Civil protests. Murder. Had not those who attempted to live ordinary lives been able to retreat into their homes, they too would think that these are what define American life. The detectives knew better. That station house provided them insight, even when they were stumped in attempting to resolve a given case. Thompson and Detective Sebastian Johnson would receive a few of these. She, her husband William and her colleague left this investigative epicenter to the scene of the homicides. William was not to accompany her to this place as it was a breach of protocol. The murders occurred in the rear of the Woolworth building. Not much is detailed regarding the activity inside this business establishment, but there were plenty nearby in the form of protests that could keep the casual observer engaged. They were only present for a few moments before they found themselves in chaos. This area had now become the potential scene of yet another murder. This place which stood with what appeared as a sound, strong building became the embodiment of weakness. Someone had tossed a Molotov cocktail against its façade. The building was not only a place which hid murder, it now became an object—a victim of a person's hate. It may be the case that Sebastian, Jacqueline, and William had also become of the same. There was no time to ponder this. This place had opened itself to violence. This area in which the ground cradled the homemade weapon foretold of no attack. Jacqueline's husband had to think quickly—and he did. The crime scene repeated its offering of death. They rejected its invitation. The building had now become unstable as the Molotov cocktail exploded. No longer had brick and mortar stacked upon one another provide the security of shopping, a place to lean against or contributed to the skyline. This place was becoming no more. It was dying, reflecting what it had witnessed days before. Debris, cement and the crashing of its architecture tumbled downward. Sebastian is separated from the other two. This building had become a barrier between two amendable colleagues. William whisks his wife away from this enemy to their lives. The building was not only a place, nor an object; it now personified pain as the loud clashes, winding, falling forward, seeking to invite those near it to feel its pain. Had it not been for William's quick instincts and timely response, he and Jacqueline may have both done so. Sebastian's status is unknown. Someone did die at this place. For some reason, Detective Johnson's wife, Margaret, was at the scene. It was here where she perished. This place created a form of anonymity for Detective Johnson.

William brings Jacqueline home. Home. The one place that she could feel safe with her adoring husband. He attempts to have her relax. She returns to work briefly to the station house. It was too soon. Her husband retrieves her. Eventually they learn that Detective Johnson barely survived. He lies in a coma in the hospital. William's and Jacqueline's home is two levels. It has now become the center of her convalescence. Her husband watches her every move, from eating to bathing and her incessant but subtle attempts to access her briefbag. Her husband had always been her centurion. William endeavoured even more to make their home a fortress against all enemies. This house is the place where they enjoy the simplest matters, from cooking to sleeping. It is also the place where the walls anticipate hearing their shared words of adoration to each other. However, they could also bear witness to William's sometimes sternness towards Jacqueline, all of which he does to continue to protect her in the smallest and grandest ways, as he see fit. Jacqueline and William enjoy the additional time they have to spend with one another. They fill it the loving beauty of kisses, play, and gentle caresses. Jacqueline and William find each other irresistible. Their hands glide, their legs rub, their bodies embrace. They entangle each other until their breaths have become one. They buoy and float, soar and reach; write and turn until the apex of what they reserved solely for one another may be accessed. Their home is their sanctum which grants them necessary privacy. Yet there is another place, one that many would consider intangible in which whispers her husband's name, in which William speaks sweetly with his deep voice into her ear; wherein their hearts dance with elation that they have revisited this refuge curated only these two to share. Their home is a witness bearer to this rare and unique bond. It vowed to not utter the secrets of this adoring union. Jacqueline and William understand that their home has taken this oath with all the respectable weight it is due.

While Detective Thompson and her husband celebrated, her colleague recovered in the sterile confines of his hospital room. This place was clean and neat, but for anyone awake, they could only see blank walls and white floors which supporting those recuperating from illness and injury. The hospital had its help. Nurses and doctors who tended to their patients with care. Visitors who arrived in different rooms to bring flowers and words of encouragement. There would be at least one time where Jacqueline, along with another colleague, Detective Mark Anderson would be one. It was not until their visit that that the near lifeless Johnson would suddenly awaken. Perhaps it was if the walls of this place had tapped him heartily on his shoulder and informed him that it was his time to awaken and rejoin this world. His room had become the center of his recovery. Detective Sebastian Johnson was the main character her, all others played their supporting roles to help him. Sebastian received other visits in this place as well, his lieutenant and a couple of his cousins. As Johnson continued to recuperate, his hospital room became the center of a new plan for their detective work. Some not knowing what the other was doing; one hand not seeing what the other hand had planned. For most, they worked towards the same goal. The murder cases had to be resolved. In this pursuit they all would discover who tarried for the opposite end. Johnson requested one of his cousins to retrieve a book his home. He believed it had significance, especially after he reflected on what he witnessed just moments before he was nearly completely buried in what was left of the Woolworth building.

There was also another place, one in which Lieutenant Davidson would often visit. This was the lab of the forensic scientists. Here is where scientific clues, other confidential conversations and perhaps the greatest surprising evidentiary link would be discovered. Davidson discussed the fingerprints. More than one gun. He had another homicide to investigate. The lieutenant accepted the explosion and associated death as his case alone, though they were all related to one another. He would soon return to the station house. This place seemed a bit more empty than before. Detective Anderson noticed it as well.



Yet it would not be before too long that they would have a final reunion. Until then, Detective Thompson would stay under the even closer watch and care of her husband William.

Their home is where the cooked meals. This is where she would listen to her husband recite her poetry as she lied upon him, muffling his words with her soft kisses. Her husband would stand behind her and hold her where she stood. Here is where they bathed together, expressed the most endearing and passionate love. They listened to music, having a dance party for two. She would make him English tea, a subtle act of her caring. Jacqueline had already considered her future in law enforcement. She concluded that her husband and their home was more important. This house observed the evolving adulation between its only occupants. It was still yet a shield from the curious onlookers and the ignorant mischief-makers. This is where they could fully be who they had always been for one another husband and wife, lovers, confidants and curators of their hearts' desires. They were each other's bastion in this guarded place and would continue to be so until time knew no end.

Jacqueline would return to work one last time to finish her case assignments. As she and the other detectives made their reports whole, the detective was amazed that she had become the center of hate at the hands of complete strangers. This country had stretched itself further on the brink of collapse because the fervent hatred of those lost to an ideology, wherein their identity and their need to unjustly harm others, was at stake. Not every matter is black and white. Sometimes hatred is just the manifestation of senseless evil.

At home with her husband again, Jacqueline nearly faints. William calls the physician to see about Jacqueline's care. This place was about to have another occupant. Jacqueline was pregnant.